

SPECIAL MEETING

CRANSTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 2 , 2005

WESTERN HILLS MIDDLE SCHOOL

400 PHENIX AVENUE

PUBLIC MEETING: 6:30 P.M.

**PUBLIC BUDGET WORK SESSION: IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING
PUBLIC MEETING**

MINUTES

A special meeting of the Cranston School Committee was held on the evening of the above date at Western Hills Middle School. This meeting was originally scheduled to take place on January 24, 2005 but was postponed to this date because of a snow storm. Present were: Mr. Archetto, Ms. Iannazzi, Mr. Lupino, Mr. Palumbo, Mr. Stycos, and Mr. Traficante. Mrs. Greifer was absent. Also present were Mrs. Ciarlo, Mr. Scherza, Mr. Balducci, Mr. Votto, Mr. Scaffardi, and Mr. Laliberte.

The meeting was called to order at 6:40 p.m.

The roll was called and the Pledge of Allegiance conducted.

Mr. Palumbo stated for the record that Mrs. Greifer was absent from this meeting because she was visiting her son who is in a military

camp. He will be going overseas, and this is her last opportunity to speak with him.

I. SPEAKERS – AGENDA ITEMS

Donna Vascancellos, 766 Laten Knight Road – Mrs. Vasconcellos spoke concerning Resolution No. 05-2-1 regarding the disbursement of the \$79,000 that was received from the City Council. She stated that she certainly appreciated the intent of this Resolution trying to restore middle school sports. She would like to endorse that except for the fact that middle school sports won't be in the budget for next year is unfortunate, but she doesn't think it is fair to the students who play fall and winter sports not to have had sports and then fund spring sports and not have sports next year. She asked that the committee put the money into texts, supplies and materials or something else and then find a way to fund sports next year.

Bob Coleman, 95 Alpine Estates Drive – He has been a Cranston home owner since 1976. As a parent and a representative for several people who observed the intramural programs versus the Cranston Interscholastic sports programs, intramurals are not even

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close. There have been strong programs at Western Hills over the

last several years. He would like to see middle school interscholastic sports reinstituted.

II. RESOLUTIONS

SPONSORED BY MR. STYCOS AND MR. ARCHETTO

NO. 05-2-1 – Whereas, the Cranston City Council and Mayor Stephen Laffey appropriated an additional \$79,850 to the Cranston School Committee,

Be it RESOLVED that the Cranston School Committee budgets \$33,000 to re-establish interscholastic middle school sports for the spring 2005 season and \$46,850 for textbooks, supplies and materials.

Be it further RESOLVED that the Superintendent shall recommend how to distribute the \$46,850 for textbooks, supplies and materials. Her recommendation will be voted upon by the Cranston School Committee.

Moved by Mr. Stycos and seconded by Mr. Archetto that this Resolution be adopted.

Ms. Iannazzi stated that this week she contacted a crime prevention specialist at the Attorney General's office who advocated strongly for

the inclusion of school sports. She stressed that she knew how important sports are. It helps lower dropout rates, and it helps keep kids motivated. However, the district doesn't have the funding it needs at this time to allocate these additional funds to middle school sports. In addition, there are programs that are still struggling such as Literacy and mathematics scores. Before focusing on sports, the committee needs to address other issues.

Mr. Lupino asked Ms. Iannazzi if this person who advocated for sports had any preference for Interscholastic sports or for an outright involvement of children during after-school hours. In response, Ms. Iannazzi indicated that this person said that it just had to be an involvement during after-school hours.

Mr. Traficante stated that he wished to hear from the Athletic Director regarding middle school sports. Mr. Traficante, Athletic Director, stated that he has been asked his opinion quite a few times since the beginning of the school year regarding the middle school sports situation. He has remained consistent in his thinking. He has no problem whatsoever putting middle school sports back into the program, but not before at some point in time that the high school program is adequately funded. The district is severely under funded at the high school level. By adding middle school sports, the district will be doing two jobs at a 75% capacity. If one can't afford the home they live in, why put an addition on. Once high school sports are funded adequately, then he would like to see middle school sports

return.

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Mr. Stycos asked Mr. Traficante if he felt the budget, as proposed by the Superintendent for next year, gives him adequate funds to run the high school program. Mr. Traficante responded that he would like more money, but realizing the big picture, he has been level funded for the last three years; and the program was cut severely the year before that. Even though the program has been level funded, the cost of everything has gone up. The cost of officials has gone up, and he has lost a lot of ground. He hasn't bought high school uniforms in three years. They rely more on fund raising for necessities than the fluff that is normally done. If the budget as proposed to the School Committee is accepted as is, both he and Dr. Cardoza will be very happy. They hope that the program is not level funded next year. Officials' fees go up every year, coaches' salaries go up every year; and the cost of medical supplies go up every year. They are buying less and less with their money.

Mr. Stycos asked Mr. Traficante what was in next year's budget that is not in the current year's budget. In response, Mr. Traficante said that reconditioning, which is a state mandate, was \$12,000 and last year it was \$5,000. Already they are \$7,000 behind because this is something that must be done. The equipment for hockey and football must be certified before the students can play these sports. It got to

the point where they were using next year's money to pay this year's bill. They are a season behind already. Mr. Traficante further noted that the amount for equipment and supplies has been the same for the past four years, and items have risen quite a bit over the last four years to the point where instead of buying a certain number of ice packs they are buying less. In last year's report, he stated that the involvement in high school sports has gone up dramatically. There were over 200 students who played football this fall, and this is by far the highest number the district has ever had. He wants middle school sports back, but he wants to do something right before doing two things half way.

Mr. Lupino asked Mr. Traficante if he was aware of the Interscholastic League's policy concerning private funding for Interscholastic sports. He asked if this was an avenue the district should try to pursue. He noted that he was not advocating it, but more and more schools are relying on private funding. Mr. Traficante responded that in Providence this past fall they lost their entire cross country programs due to lack of funding. CVS stepped in and donated \$25,000. The Interscholastic League doesn't advocate it, but more schools are relying on it as their budgets are being level funded. On-site trainers may become a mandate, and he knows that LaSalle Academy has one. The cost for this part-time trainer is over \$26,000 a year. The mandate is right around the corner that there be trainers at the schools, be it full time or part time. Mr. Lupino summed up Mr. Traficante's remarks by stating that private funding is not forbidden,

but it is encouraged. Mr. Traficante added that more and more schools are relying on private funding. Cranston East and Cranston West had golf tournaments to buy football

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helmets this past year. He realizes the situation the committee is in, but he wants to get a sound footing with the high school situation before getting back into middle school sports again.

Mr. Palumbo asked that if the district were to go with private funding for sports, would he have to do a lot of work up front before putting the program into place. Mr. Traficante said that it would be the same group of people doing a lot of the work. There were four or five people who did all the work for freshman sports funding in order to raise \$28,000. There is a lot of preparation and it is a lot of work.

Mr. Archetto stated that the issue is money, and the School Committee and the City Council have to be more creative and innovative as far as how money is raised. The school department can't rely upon property taxes any longer. He asked Mr. Traficante that theoretically in the sports arena in order for Cranston to be competitive with the Interscholastic League would it be more

advantageous to develop the player at a younger age. In response, Mr. Traficante said he believed they were being developed at a younger age still. The students who didn't play middle school basketball at Park View, Bain, and Western Hills played either CLCF, CYO, or AAU basketball. Mr. Archetto stated that he took Mr. Traficante's response as being yes to his question.

Mr. Lupino reminded Mr. Archetto that during his son's four-year career at Cranston West, there were two state championships in hockey, and there was no middle school program for hockey. This year there was a Super Bowl High School Championship football team, and there is no middle school football program. He doesn't believe the success of the high school sports program is dependent upon the middle school program.

Mr. Traficante stated that having spent twenty-five years of his life on a Cranston athletic field, whether it be as a player or as a coach, this committee doesn't have to convince him of the need, importance, value, or necessity of youth athletics. The athletic field is a profound and unique classroom because it has the ability to instill in the students, far better than any traditional classroom, those qualities that are absolutely necessary for the highs and lows of every day life. Football and basketball are not a means to an end; it is a means to a beginning. He would be inclined to support this resolution, however, he was handed a memo from Mr. Balducci that indicated there are several accounts in deficit positions right now. He asked how this

committee could expend more money rather than allocating that money toward the deficit accounts. He told Mr. Stycos that he was looking to him, and he gives him due credit, because he has seen him scrutinize budgets looking for nickels and dimes to save the taxpayers additional tax dollars. He asked him to give him some words to pass on to his constituents defining the fact that he is spending more money even though he knows there are deficits in accounts that could utilize this money and save the taxpayers further expenses in the future.

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Mr. Stycos thanked the people who made this discussion possible. He thanked the state legislature for giving the \$79,000 because they increased the Governor's budget for municipal aid by \$79,000 for Cranston. They also increased it on the school side with an allocation of \$500,000. In addition, thanks are owed to the City Council and the Mayor for appropriating that money to the school department because they could have spent it on a lot of other things that various department heads in City Hall could have used it for. Instead, they gave it to the school department. After some political debate, they gave it without any strings attached. He also thanked Mr. Palumbo for putting this item on the agenda. Mr. Stycos went on further to say that he attempted to put this on the agenda under the previous chairperson, and she simply wouldn't put it on the agenda which is a violation of the School Committee rules. Mr. Palumbo took

the democratic approach, and even though he doesn't agree with the resolution, he put it on the agenda so that there could be a discussion and an airing of the issue.

Mr. Stycos further commented that middle school sports are very important. Both his children took advantage of them when they were in middle school. It is an activity for kids and one which keeps them busy. They develop their own personal identity and an identity with the school. It is no better than band or chorus; it is just another activity. It is also a very inexpensive activity for the amount of time that the students are supervised. He referred to Mr. Traficante's comment regarding running deficits in certain accounts and where the money would come from. He stated that this is an argument that normally he would be fairly receptive to, but at a meeting of the previous School Committee, budget adjustments were done. One of the budget adjustments was giving three employees upgrades in addition to the 3.5% raise that everyone received. The total of those three raises were \$10,449. The committee also gave very large raises to the top administrators in the system. He has said repeatedly that the top administrators generally do a very good job, but as Mr. Palumbo commented in the newspaper, the district has to make choices, and his choice would be to fund text books or middle school sports before he gave a very large raise to someone making \$80,000 or \$90,000 a year. This brings the total to \$26,000. The committee in that adjustment zeroed out in their budget deliberations. The Superintendent said they spent a total of \$7,400 in those accounts

even though the School Committee voted to zero them out. That brings the total to \$33,000. Another item is the legal expense. There are two lawsuits that the committee has filed against the Mayor, both of which he opposed. He doesn't think either one is going anywhere, and it has cost the school district \$70,000 in legal expenses; and it isn't in the court room yet. This brings the total to \$100,000. Regarding the special education issue, he feels it is a legitimate problem. The School Committee has to watch the budget revisions. In the last revision, the committee cut special education accounts, and the two added together total \$300,000. Having just cut, at the recommendation of the Superintendent, two special education accounts by \$300,000, to come back two months later stating that the district is running a deficit in the special education account of \$120,000, makes him wonder how they are budgeting. This same issue of cutting accounts and then saying there is a deficit in those accounts

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is raised in the performance audit. Mr. Palumbo stated that he didn't want Mr. Stycos to delve into the performance audit. Mr. Stycos said that what he is observing in the current budget is also observed in the performance audit. If the committee thinks that text books and middle school sports are important, then they need to allocate money to text books and middle school sports and not things such as extra raises for people, legal expenses, and cutting accounts to state that

there are deficits in those accounts. The school department has a huge budget and the committee, even without these items, ought to be able to find money for middle school sports. He urged passage of this proposal.

Mr. Palumbo asked Mr. Balducci to respond why those special education items were treated the way they were treated. Mr. Balducci responded that the special education tuitions are based on prior placements, and then a new year begins. Sometimes money budgeted in one area is insufficient based on the type of placement that is needed. Mr. Stycos was correct; all deductions in all special education tuitions accounts added up to approximately \$335,000. However, that money was transferred in other outside special education tuition accounts because based on the type of placement that the student went to, he needed more money in that account based on the accounting that he has to maintain based upon the Department of Education. Therefore, money was just shifted from one account to the other. There was a zero effect on that area. Money was deducted from some accounts, but then again it was added to other accounts. He stated that he would be glad to assist Mr. Stycos in finding those accounts for him.

Mrs. Ciarlo commented on the two other issues Mr. Stycos brought up. One had to do with raises for administrators. She pointed out that Cranston is one of the lowest paid in the state with regard to salaries for administrators. There are six people who run central

office, and she is one of them. Under no circumstances is she ashamed of nor feel that they should not be adequately compensated for the hours and the work that they do and the quality of the work they do. There won't be a good school system if there aren't good people running the school system as well as the wonderful teachers and cooperation from the parents. It always happens that it is either books or salaries. If there aren't good teachers, books are useless. If there are good administrators, the system won't go very far. Mrs. Ciarlo went on to say that the second item Mr. Stycos brought up had to do with legal fees. If the school department didn't have the Mayor suing it on a regular basis, writing letters to the school department, or getting on his bullhorn in front of the school administration building trying to make issues, there wouldn't be the legal fees just to defend themselves. She asked the committee to keep in mind that this was not something that administration desired to do, and if there weren't all the legal challenges from next door, they wouldn't find themselves in the position to spend the money that they do.

Mr. Palumbo referred to Mr. Stycos's remarks and said that there is no slight of hand in the fact that they had to put money back into special education as Mr. Balducci had

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commented earlier. The committee should not have to stoop to the point where they tell their administrators and teachers that they will

have to pay for the programs that should be instituted in the schools. In addition, Mr. Palumbo asked what had changed since the last time they debated this question. The city gave the additional \$79,000 with the suggestion that the committee re-institute middle school interscholastic sports. He asked if the school department was appropriated the necessary funds to rehire teacher assistants in the elementary classrooms who are necessary if the school department is to continue its excellent progress which has been experienced in the Literacy Program. He asked if the school department was appropriated the necessary funds to increase the purchase of books and materials to the level that existed in 2001. He answered that the school department had received neither. He asked if the school department had the necessary funds to begin, and he underlined the word begin, to institute their technology plan in the schools. He asked if the school department had the necessary funds to cover the possible deficits that appear to be running for heating fuel, bus fuel, and special education that were mentioned. He answered that they were not. He asked how anyone from the public or anyone of his colleagues could even suggest, no matter what the amount is, to re-institute interscholastic middle school sports. This subject must be put aside until the district is properly funded in the basic educational areas. Intramural sports will do the job until the budget is properly funded, and he emphasized that he agreed wholeheartedly with the editorial that appeared in the Cranston Herald. It was spelled out very clearly as to where middle school interscholastic sports should be at this particular time. He asked all his colleagues to put

this issue aside until the School Committee has the funding. People have come to the microphone and spoke about one reason after another why it can't be done. The committee can't ignore all these things and say that they can steal it in the budget from the scholastic part of the program to give it to sports. If that is the committee's choice, they can't do it. In his opinion, he feels that none of his colleagues would want to do this at this particular time.

Mr. Traficante referred to a memo Mr. Balducci distributed to the School Committee at this meeting. Mr. Balducci, in his memo, addressed the special education deficit of approximately \$121,000 with the potential of going to \$400,000 in those particular accounts. He asked Mr. Balducci if he could identify any other accounts that are running in a deficit position at the present time that the committee is not aware of. In response, Mr. Balducci said that there could be a number of smaller accounts that may be in a deficit position of \$100 or \$200. Those accounts mentioned in the memo were selected because of their magnitude. As of today, there are a couple of other areas of concern that are not mentioned in his memo, and those are transportation and plan maintenance. Mr. Zisseron goes to his office on an almost daily basis talking about the need for additional funding in that area. In the next revision, those areas will be discussed, and that will be another concern for him. At the present time, that area is not in a deficit position, but most definitely it will be. If the winter continues the way it is

going with the temperatures the way they are, the wear and tear on the buses with the amount of snow on the roads and the amount of repair work for the buses, this is an area of concern. Mr. Traficante stated that regardless of what the deficit might be, this \$80,000 could be put to good use in a variety of areas as Mr. Balducci had mentioned. This money will help the committee in the revision process to offset some of these deficits. He gave Mr. Stycos credit for scrutinizing budgets over the years to look for nickels and dimes. He would be surprised if this committee would be willing to spend more money when they knew they were facing deficit positions, and this \$80,000 could help offset those positions.

Mr. Lupino stated that he wished to set the record straight as he understood the issue. He told Mr. Stycos that at a previous work session he had handed out to selected members of the committee his proposed resolution in October. He said selected because he had a conversation with the previous chairperson to ask her what she thought of the resolution, and she had not received a copy of it. At that time, the resolution as written was dictating from the Mayor to the School Committee where to spend the money. He believed that on several occasions Mrs. White told Mr. Stycos that she would not accept a resolution in that form because it dictated how the money was to be spent. Not only is it illegal to do that by the City Charter

but also it sets a precedent. At no time after that at the next two meetings did Mr. Stycos formally introduce a resolution through the proper channels.

Mr. Lupino moved to amend this Resolution.

Mr. Stycos stated that he did not select anyone to give a copy of the resolution. Mr. Stycos told Mr. Lupino that he was correct in stating that he did not give a copy to Mrs. White. He doesn't know why he didn't. The procedure is that when a committee member has a resolution he or she hands it to the secretary of the School Committee. As an extra step, he handed it out to some members of the committee, but the secretary of the School Committee received one. The rules say that when a resolution is proposed it goes on the agenda at the request of a member. Secondly, he referred to Mr. Lupino's comments regarding dictating where the money would be spent. He told Mr. Lupino that if he read the resolution it said that the School Committee requested the Council and the Mayor to give up the \$79,000 for the purpose of middle school sports. If that resolution had passed, the only dictate would have been done by the School Committee, so there was no dictating at that point in the resolution. Mrs. White didn't want it on the agenda. There was no legal opinion given by anyone in writing to substantiate that. He further pointed out that while the Mayor has sued the school department in the past, at the current moment the School Committee is the only body suing. The committee is suing in two different lawsuits.

Again, Mr. Lupino moved to amend this resolution as follows:

Delete the first half of the first sentence of the second paragraph and replace it with:

Be it RESOLVED that the Cranston School budgets \$79,850 for textbooks, supplies and materials and any other areas that the Superintendent deems necessary after reporting to the School Committee. It will also include a small amount to shore up or support an intramural program after discussion with the principals and the Athletic Director.

Mr. Palumbo asked Mr. Lupino how the entire resolution would read.

Mr. Lupino stated:

Whereas, the Cranston City Council and Mayor Stephen Laffey appropriated an additional \$79,850 to the Cranston School Committee,

Be it RESOLVED that the Cranston School Committee budgets \$79,850 for textbooks, supplies, materials, and expenditures deemed necessary by the Superintendent after consulting with the School Committee and X amount of dollars to enhance the intramural program after discussions with the three middle school principals and the Athletic Director.

Be it further RESOLVED that the Superintendent shall recommend how she will distribute this money. Her recommendation will be voted upon by the Cranston School Committee.

There was no second to this motion.

This Resolution was defeated with Mr. Archetto and Mr. Stycos in favor; Ms. Iannazzi, Mr. Lupino, Mr. Palumbo, and Mr. Traficante were opposed.

Mr. Archetto commented that he voted in favor of this resolution. He hated to see twelve, thirteen and fourteen year old children hurt, and on the other hand give top administrators pay raises.

Mr. Traficante stated that a very famous football coach once said that nothing is as important as the score after. What the coach was saying is that the half is over, and it is history. Let's start a new half. This committee should not be debating what the previous School Committee did or did not do. At that particular time, he assumed they

thought they were doing the right thing. He asked the committee to move forward and stop debating the past.

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ADMINISTRATION

BUSINESS

NO. 05-2-2 – RESOLVED, that the 2005-2006 Capital Budget, as recommended by the Superintendent, be approved.

CAPITAL BUDGET

2005-2006

CRANSTON HIGH SCHOOL EAST – CONSTRUCTION

Funds from Bond Resolution No. 00-40

Design Services	\$ 225,000
Construction Start-up	4,000,000
Bans	169,000
	\$4,394,000

PARK VIEW MIDDLE SCHOOL RENOVATION AND IMPROVEMENTS

Funds from Bond Resolution No. 02-RIGL

Design Service (additional)	\$ 50,000
Construction Start-up	2,000,000
Bans	82,000
	\$2,132,000

FIRE CODE IMPROVEMENTS

Funds from Bond Resolution No. 02-RIGL

Fire Code Improvement	\$ 500,000
Design Service	25,000
Bans	22,000
	\$ 547,000
	\$7,073,000

Moved by Mr. Lupino and seconded by Mr. Traficante that this Resolution be adopted.

Mr. Lupino stated to Mrs. Ciarlo that he knew in this Capital Budget the committee was attempting to complete Cranston High School East. One of the issues was the bond authority and whether or not the city would be at investment grade. He believed the city

was at two out of three right now. He was assuming that this might go through. He asked if anything had changed because a few years ago the project was almost started for Park View Middle School. He was also concerned about Western Hills Middle School. He asked if anything had changed regarding the order of the projects. Mrs. Ciarlo responded that Cranston East is still on the front burner. This is not to complete Cranston East but rather it is for design services and bans. They are trying to take care of some of these projects over a multi-year basis and, therefore, be able to do more than one thing. She can't make a move until she does something with Park View. There is an approximate bond of \$2 million for Park View. Four or five years ago that project would have cost approximately \$1.8 million, and now the cost has gone up. The fire code improvement is another item that must be done.

Mr. Zisseron explained further that in this year's capital budget for Cranston East there is approval by the City Council for \$225,000 for design services. That certainly will not be enough to do this project. This project, whether they go with an architect or design build, will be at least a \$500,000 fee. Therefore, he is asking for another \$225,000 toward the design. Regarding construction, this money is coming out of a bond that was \$13.8 million, and some of that money has already been expended. There is approximately \$11,400,000 left in this bond. For the Cranston East project, he is looking at \$8 million or \$9 million.

Out of the \$9 million, the district has to plan for bans out of that money. Therefore, the Cranston East project should run approximately \$9 million. The district is asking for \$4 million this year to get into the project. Obviously he is putting in bans against what is being asked for this year. With reference to the proposed schedule for Cranston East, the School Buildings Committee at their next meeting, will vote on a fee for design services. He would like to see sometime in April someone appointed for the design of the project. In the meantime, the committee has to begin thinking what they want to do with the Briggs Building and administration because the least disruptive thing to do with Cranston East is to take the first floor of the Briggs Building and convert it into a media center. That becomes the least disruptive to the school. In addition, it has the square footage required. This then becomes a problem for administration to find a home. He would like to see the project with shovels in the ground sometime in June or July of 2006. At that point, NEASC will be visiting Cranston East, and we want to show in good faith that the city has gone forward on this project and is starting the project.

Mr. Zisseron went on to say that unfortunately at the time the Park View project was approved to go forward with an architect, there was a complete design and it was ready to go out to bid; and the city went into a financial crisis, and the project never got off the ground. The project was to replace the C Wing, which is a very big embarrassment to the school department and to that school. He invited the

committee to visit the school and look at that particular wing. The project originally was estimated at \$1.8 million adding 15,500 square feet for the 6th grade, and a number of the rooms were going to be science rooms for the 6th grade. Due to the delay, the cost jumped to \$2.1 million. It has been on the back burner for a couple of years, and now it has jumped to

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approximately \$3.1 to \$3.2 million which means that with the new fire codes there has to be some redesign for that project. Therefore, there is an additional \$50,000 for design.

With regard to the fire code improvements, Mr. Zisseron stated that he is working with the Fire Inspection Department of the Cranston Fire Department going through a hearing that will be conducted with the State Fire Marshall's Office presenting what the school department feels they would ask for in exceptions with regard to the new laws. They will also have to give them some type of time schedule as to when some of this work will be done. Some of buildings will require new sprinklers, which will cost a lot of money. This work will be done in some of the other schools such as Barrows, Dutemple and Waterman. He will have to present a time schedule to the State Fire Marshall's Office.

Mrs. Ciarlo explained that this Capital Budget, if passed at this

meeting, would go to the Mayor and City Council. She asked when this would take place if the Council and Mayor approve it and it is incorporated into their budget. Mr. Zisseron responded that the City Planning Commission must have a copy of this resolution. The Mayor and his administration will review it, and they will then come forward with what they feel the city can afford to give the school department for projects, not particularly earmarked, but a certain amount for Cranston East. That will go as a part of the Mayor's presentation to the City Council. The City Council has the final say and vote on the Capital Budget.

Mrs. Ciarlo indicated to Mr. Zisseron that one of the other issues is that for a long time something needs to be done at Western Hills. She asked him what he proposed to do for Western Hills. Mr. Zisseron indicated that this project would have to be on a bond of its own on the next election. The approximate cost is \$8 or \$9 million. There are portable classrooms in the back of Western Hills that represent 14,000 square feet which does not include any type of corridors that would have to be included for square footage or any additional laboratories. The portables represent only classroom space. On top of that, fire alarm work will have to be done because the present system is antiquated. It is safe and it works, but it must be upgraded.

The consumer science rooms need work, which also holds true for Park View and Bain. They haven't been touched in approximately thirty or forty years. This project will be a stand-alone project on the next election. The cafeteria will have to be taken into consideration

because he knows that Mr. Nero has been quite adamant about the fact that he needs more space.

The committee has gone back and forth regarding population increases and decreases. The district might lose 200 students, but that is city wide; and the committee has to think in terms of citywide and not 200 students in one part of the city. Western Hills' population may drop 100 or 150 students in the next year or two, but it will go back up. There is still a lot of land to be developed in western Cranston. Cranston is a desirable community, and a survey was taken several years ago; and the number one reason people move to Cranston is due to the educational system. That will not change.

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Mrs. Ciarlo commented that there was a proposal for the three middle schools not only for the consumer science upgrades at Western Hills but also at Bain. Bain is the oldest middle school and certainly needs refurbishing. Mr. Zisseron responded that Bain needs to be addressed for the consumer science department and laboratories. Bain could have its own bond as well. It was discussed last year to have a middle school bond for Bain, Park View and Western Hills which could approximate \$14 or \$15 million. No money has been invested in these schools. Bain stands the same as it did thirty plus years ago. Park View has had no improvements or upgrades, and he was not referring to making the schools fancy but simply upgrading

the buildings. The committee would be embarrassed at the condition of the consumer science rooms or science rooms. At some point in time, the committee will be faced with some very tough educational situations.

Mr. Traficante asked that if the \$4.3 million was appropriated out of Bond Resolution No. 00-40, was it correct that there would be \$11.4 million left in that authority. Mr. Zisseron responded that there is \$11.4 million left in that authority right now. The following year he would ask for the remaining money for the project. Mr. Traficante referred to Bond Resolution No. 02-RIGL and indicated that approximately \$2.6 million was being appropriated. Mr. Zisseron said that this bond was passed approximately four years ago for \$2.9 million for repair and renovations. That bond has not been touched. There is approximately \$300,000 left in that bond. He reminded the committee that this past November another bond for repair and renovation was passed for \$7 million. It is a matter of what the authority the city can afford to give since they have their own projects as well. Mr. Traficante added that Plan A is Cranston East and Plan B, if the school department doesn't get the money, it will be just Cranston East and not Park View. Mr. Zisseron commented that the fire coding must be done. There is \$550,000 in this year's capital budget which has been approved, but more will be needed to continue the fire code work. The money for the roof at Cranston East, Oak Lawn and the fire code work is just a matter now that the city's bond rating has gone up hopefully the city will be going to market

shortly; and the money will be there for those projects.

Mr. Stycos referred to the Park View project and asked Mr. Zisseron that other than the references he made to changing the fire safety was it essentially the same proposal as was presented, and Mr. Zisseron said that it was. He believed that the project was 15,500 square feet, which was eight additional rooms. Mr. Stycos asked that with the money that has already been approved with the current capital budget plus this \$500,000 did Mr. Zisseron see this as finishing the fire code work issues. Mr. Zisseron responded that he felt confident system wide after this work was done. Some of the work could be done in house during the summer, but his concerns are sprinkler systems, and he is trying to get a more defined definition of door closures on every door that leads into a corridor. That alone will cost \$100,000 if it has to be done. He is attempting to get a better interpretation of this particular code. Something will have to

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be done at Western Hills with respect to the egress at the gym so that the capacity can be increased. There are various things to be done at some of the schools. One of the biggest things that concerns him is that there are no longer any basements; they are lower levels. In the lower level of a building, or even on the first floor, the current code states that there must be one window no higher than 44" from the

floor. In some of the older buildings, they exceed 44” which means that one window in each room must be taken down to 44” so that the firemen can go in that window in case of a fire or so that the students can be taken out. Mr. Stycos asked if there was a listing of what the needs are in each of the buildings. Mr. Zisseron responded that once he had the list put together he would submit it to the Superintendent.

Mr. Stycos distributed to the committee a copy of the Capital Budget Review which is a school and city comparison. This was done at the request of the City Planning Department. It included a breakdown of the past nine years of what the city’s actual budget was spent during this time period. He agreed that the basement wing of Park View really should be addressed. Both of his children had classes there and were very cramped. However, he felt that as a School Committee as they enter into budget season they have got to make proposals to City Hall that are realistic; and if they don’t do that, then he felt that weakened their credibility at City Hall. The addition at Park View is certainly needed. If the committee were to look at the numbers, there has been only one year in the past nine when the entire capital budget of the city has been equal or greater than \$7 million. The committee is discussing a proposal that is \$7 million just for the schools, and \$7 million at a time when everyone has capital needs, the schools, the roads, and the Recreation Department, have been on hold because of the city’s financial difficulties. As much as all of these things are needed, the school department won’t get \$7 million.

If there is a budget of \$7 million for the entire city, it will be remarkable. The committee needs to recognize this, and the Park View project should be put on hold until there is some money available to do it. Everyone in his district goes to Park View, but the fact is that when the committee goes to City Hall, they should have a request that is reasonable. \$7 million, while it is needed, is not a reasonable request. The capital budgets have run \$4 million in the last three years, and once they were over \$7 million. In the absence of discussion, Mr. Stycos said that he would offer an amendment to eliminate the Park View proposal from this capital budget.

Mrs. Ciarlo took issue with Mr. Stycos. She stated that it was the school department's responsibility to let the public know what the needs are. It is not the school department's responsibility, even though it is taken seriously, to take into consideration what the costs are. Park View, if it could have been done four years ago, would have cost \$1.8 million. It will cost close to \$5 million by the time it is completed. She would like to consider some redistricting in the city, but she can do nothing as long as there is no addition to Park View because there is no room. There is a trailer park outside of Western Hills, and it is disgraceful. This city does not need that. First of all, this is a well-financed city, and it has the money if they managed it wisely.

She is not worrying about the credibility of City Hall, because she doesn't get the respect anyway. She has nothing to lose; she can only go up. Cranston East should have been done a long time ago, and the district is now waiting because NEASC is coming so that the district can put a shovel in the ground so that it will appear they are taking seriously what was said ten years ago. On top of all this comes the fire code, which has been changed, and the change must be made. She further commented that the children in Cranston are not financed as well as the children in Warwick, East Providence, North Providence, and everywhere else. They have bonds and do things to their schools. Mrs. Ciarlo complimented Mr. Zisseron and his staff for a situation that developed at Peters School this week where there was a boiler problem. They had to abandon the school and did it in a very smooth fashion. They didn't call Channel 12 to get on the news. Grades Kindergarten, 1 and 2 went to one school, and grades 3, 4, and 5 went to another school. They took care of lunches as well. The district needs to seriously consider what is needed and let the city know what it is. This is something that has been long standing. Until this project is done, they won't get to Western Hills and Bain. They are deteriorating. There is a good educational program, and no one would want the schools to look as some schools do in some parts of the country. She appealed to the School Committee to put this forward. She told them that it was not their worry to know how the city will do it. They need to know that the School Committee considers it a priority. It needs to be done, and it needs to be done soon.

Ms. Iannazzi noted that as long as the discussion was regarding being taken seriously by the Mayor and the City Council, she recognized Councilwoman Fogarty who is the Chair of the Finance Committee. Ms. Iannazzi further commented that obviously Mrs. Fogarty cares enough to attend the budget hearing.

Mr. Traficante noted to Mr. Stycos that he may be on target. The Mayor will have a number of requests from other departments, but Mr. Traficante said that he agreed with the Superintendent that it was not the committee's job to cut this proposal. The committee should identify what their primary consideration is, and that, of course, is Cranston East and the fire code work.

Mr. Archetto asked if this was a request to the Mayor's office and if he could amend it and send it back to the School Committee. In response, Mr. Palumbo said that the Mayor could suggest what he thinks it should be. The City Council makes the decision. Mr. Archetto noted that he would support this resolution.

Mr. Lupino commented to Mr. Stycos that it seemed that his history was either behind him or before him or was still going. It seemed that Mr. Stycos's children had strings, and they didn't like strings so he was willing to cut strings. His children are no longer at Park View so he doesn't feel the addition is necessary. Mr. Lupino further said that he was not willing to push off the Western Hills project any longer

than need be. That is why he asked the question regarding priorities. The priorities as presented by Mr.

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Zisseron and the Superintendent, and they are Cranston East, Park View and Western Hills. He will not allow the Western Hills' project to be put off any longer. Mr. Nero, Western Hills' principal, cannot put the entire 6th grade class in their auditorium at one time. It can be stretched out only so long. He agreed with the Superintendent that the committee's duty is to the children and to support the building. Mr. Lupino stated that he supported the proposal as presented.

Mr. Stycos stated that he felt the committee's duty was to provide the best education possible for the students. Putting forth budget proposals that are reasonable get the committee further than putting proposals forth that are so high that the reaction is that the committee is not paying attention to the money they are spending; therefore, city administration will not pay attention to their requests. He stated that he would not respond to the past history. He felt that Mr. Traficante's suggestion was a good one. He felt that the suggestion regarding prioritizing was a good one. He felt it was a good amendment to make. He encouraged Mr. Traficante to make an amendment to that effect. Mrs. Ciarlo added that the administration and the School Committee usually get together before the capital budget is decided. They call school administration, and they then

negotiate. When a project is prioritized, the city takes it off. She suggested that it be sent forth as proposed. When the time comes, they will know that the school department's priorities are Cranston East and fire code. The only thing that could survive for one more year is Park View. Mr. Palumbo commented that it was the same thing last year. Mr. Zisseron put forth several items, and the committee went through the same thing. Mr. Stycos talked at that time about a reasonable amount. Mr. Palumbo commented that he is of the same state of mind that he was then. The committee has to say what needs to be done; nothing is frivolous and all is very necessary. The committee doesn't know what City Hall will spend their money on. If they want to cut this proposal, so be it. At least the committee is telling them what has to be done. He doesn't think that Mr. Stycos will disagree with the fact that the schools are in terrible condition. It seems that work is done only when something is truly falling apart and becomes a danger. At Cranston East, the roof is falling in; and this should have been addressed this past summer. It is not a matter of the committee not asking for things to be done because they may not have the money. It is the committee's role to say this is what has to be done. In the final analysis, let the City Council determine it.

Mr. Stycos asked Mr. Traficante if he were going to propose an amendment to prioritize the projects. Mr. Traficante said he didn't think it had to be in the form of a motion, but he encouraged Superintendent Ciarlo and Mr. Zisseron that when they are discussing this issue with Mayor that they make him realize that none

of the projects are frivolous and that when push comes to shove there is a priority which must be Cranston East because they are facing their evaluation and also the fire codes which are being mandated by state law. If the school department is fortunate and the Mayor feels he can afford the appropriate dollars, then Park View is in the picture. If not, then the

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committee should prioritize and Cranston East should be focused on. Mr. Stycos stated that he would not offer the amendment.

This Resolution was adopted unanimously.

Moved by Mr. Lupino, seconded by Mr. Traficante and unanimously carried that the meeting be adjourned to the public budget work session.

There being no further business to come before the meeting, it was adjourned to the public budget work session at 7:55 p.m.

Mr. Palumbo called a five-minute recess.

III. ADJOURN TO PUBLIC BUDGET WORK SESSION

Mr. Palumbo convened the public budget work session at 8:10 p.m. All members were present.

Mr. Palumbo stated that he would allow the public to speak on a non-agenda item.

Celeste Bertolino, 185 Kimberly Lane – She stated that she and her husband have been lifelong residents of Cranston and homeowners within the City of Cranston since 1993. They have a daughter in 2nd grade at Hope Highlands and a son who will enter Hope Highlands in Kindergarten in the fall. She was speaking to the committee asking them to consider their request for an additional teacher at Hope Highlands School. While some of the committee members have indicated that this school is not in need of further resources, she felt that the full facts had not been presented to this committee. Right now there are three 2nd grade classrooms running at full capacity with twenty-five students in each. In addition, there are 2nd graders who live in the Hope Highlands School district who have not been allowed to attend Hope Highlands because each of these classrooms is at full capacity. Her child has been placed in a classroom with full capacity since Kindergarten, and the number of children who will be turned away from the school is steadily increasing. It should come as no surprise to anyone that there are additional housing developments going up in the Hope Highlands School district so this problem will continue to worsen, not get better, each year that this is not

addressed. Her immediate concern for speaking tonight came from a recent event involving her daughter. Her daughter has always been an exemplary student, and a few days ago she came home with a less than stellar mark on an in-class work assignment. Upon inquiring as to why she earned such a low mark, she said that she couldn't see the board. Her mother asked if she needed glasses, but her daughter said there were too many kids in front of her; she couldn't see what was going on because the taller kids were blocking her view. Her mother asked her why she didn't ask the teacher what the

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direction was or what the assignment was, and she said she raised her hand but there were so many other kids asking questions, that the teacher had to end the session and move on to the next topic. She copied down the wrong information, turned the information in and received a low mark. If this was the sole occasion that she had commented on the lack of time to ask her teacher a question, she wouldn't be standing before the committee tonight; but it is not the first time her daughter has mentioned the fact that she hadn't been able to get questions answered and not have been able to get to the teacher because other students were in front of her. She felt this was a clear indication that this is a wonderful instructor who has been forced to deal with too many students. She has the utmost respect and empathy for those on the committee who determine the budget allotment for Cranston Public Schools, and she sincerely

hoped that they did not view her statements as selfish. She asked if it was better to educate these students correctly the first time rather than paying a much steeper cost involved in re-educating them later. She has sought counsel on this subject from a variety of individuals, some of whom have advised her to request just a teacher aide rather than an instructor. However, they have always had a bad experience following this type of advice last year. The parents successfully lobbied for a teacher aide. The school was opened with each 2nd grade teacher staffed with one full-time teacher aide. At the end of the first week of those classes, one of those aides was re-assigned to a Title 1 school, and the parents were told that Hope Highlands did not have that kind of a need. Many of the committee members have indicated that Hope Highlands' children are well fed, come from homes with heat, electricity and computers, and certainly this is the case with her own two children. She was fully aware of the special circumstances that Title 1 children face, and she totally wants them to be taken care of. It should not be at the expense of one group to take care of another. She sincerely hoped that the committee would not continue to rob from Peter to pay Paul during the development of the Cranston school budget. An additional teacher is needed. It wouldn't take the ratios down from 25 to 12; it would bring them to 20 or 21 which is still a lot for a teacher to handle. She asked the committee to listen and consider their request. If any of the committee members had any questions, they could contact any of the Hope Highlands' 2nd grade parents.

Michael Cardarelli, Jr., 53 Fairfield Road – Mr. Cardarelli referred to the \$79,850 mentioned in Mr. Balducci's memo earlier in the evening. As the committee knows, in this current budget there are many aides, teachers, and textbooks that are needed. Sports, however, as the committee voted tonight, are not necessary. He thanked the four members who opposed the resolution. Mr. Cardarelli brought his son's math book to the meeting. This is not the new math curriculum math book but the old one. As a parent in the school system, there is a need to be filled before spending money on other areas. There are curriculum needs that must be met. Before enhancing extra-curricular areas, the committee must meet the needs of curriculum areas. He referred to the previous speaker and told Mr. Stykos that he had set a benchmark. His career has been a benchmark of information, information that he has used to inform the School

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Committee, City Councils, and the Mayors. He has always wanted the most information and wanted the committee to have the most information in order to make informed decisions. He felt it was a disservice that the City Council and the Mayor not know what the total educational needs of this community are. The City Council and the Mayor need to know what is needed to properly run this school system. It makes sense to send Mrs. Ciarlo and Mr. Zisseron to tell the Mayor that the fire code and Park View are needed.

Through the proper channels, they can decide what is fair. If the Mayor wants to make a spectacle of it, and if he wants to exploit the amount, and if he wants to have a press conference, shame on him. Mr. Stycos's duty as an elected School Committee member is to inform him in a gentlemanly, dignified way. If he chooses to exploit that for personal gain, then shame on him. In the six years he was on the committee, he never took part in it because he didn't want to be part of it. As a member, Mr. Stycos has the obligation to inform the City Council and the Mayor what those requirements are. The parents are held responsible to let the school know what the needs are. Mr. Stycos represents Park View and he expects him to inform them of what the needs are. The chances of seeing Park View completed is the same chance as seeing hell freeze over. He also told Mr. Archetto that he has the responsibility to vote. He asked him to vote when his turn came.

Regarding the new budget, he pleaded with the committee regarding the math coaching positions. When Mrs. Ciarlo spoke on this subject he was very happy to hear it, but this may be one of the areas that will be cast one side because people may say they never had them before. He referred to the math scores for 2004 and the inequities in mathematics. At Barrows School with 100% of the students taking the exam and Arlington School with 100% taking the exam, and two varying size schools with Barrows have many more students, at Arlington School 35% of the students met or exceeded the standard of mathematics and at Barrows School 95% of the students met or

exceeded the standard. This indicates that a school can achieve it in a much larger school in the same district and secondly at a Blue Ribbon School, Arlington School, there is a problem. 65% of the students at Arlington did not achieve the standard in mathematics. The mathematics coaches are needed. At Bain, 31% met or exceeded the standard. 68.8% did not meet or exceed the mathematics assessment. At Cranston East 38% met or exceeded the standard. This is 11th grade, and there is one more year to try to get them. At Cranston West where there is no ESL population but does have a significant special education population, 51% met or exceeded the math assessment. He reiterated that the math coaches were needed. He stated further that Superintendent Ciarlo wasn't made Superintendent of the Year for nothing. She is looking forward and seeing an area that needs to be addressed now. These math coaches are forward and proactive thinking positions that are much over due. He asked the committee to keep this in the back of their minds. The district is doing great in reading because Mrs. Ciarlo started every child a reader a long time ago, and it is paying off in gold now. The committee needs to make every child a multiplier and needs to push mathematics with the same push as there was for reading. The district

can't tolerate giving the children old curriculum books. He has asked the committee to support the Superintendent in her endeavors and

promote the Superintendent and her initiatives and promote her administrators rather than looking at them as the first line to be cut.

Mrs. Ciarlo asked Mr. Balducci to explain the 2005-2006 State Aid projections based on the Governor's budget. Mr. Balducci explained that this document was based on the Governor's proposed budget identifies state aid, and it is projected currently based on his budget for the next fiscal year. It is broken down by the different areas or components of state aid. It is also listed by community where on page 6 it indicates that Cranston currently is scheduled to receive \$33,942,639 in state aid next year. Currently in the budget state aid is level funded at this year's rate. Hopefully, Cranston will receive an increase of \$913,000 as proposed by the Governor over this year's current level. A copy of this report is attached for the record.

Mr. Lupino asked what it meant by No. 2 on the first page "Full day kindergarten, group home, and charter aid are fully funded." Mr. Balducci responded that he believed this was for existing programs and not projected programs. Based on prior allocations to different areas, the Governor totally funded at the same level as he did in prior years. He did not add more money to an area nor did he reduce the money allocated in this area.

Ms. Iannazzi asked Mr. Balducci if it was a mistake under full-day Kindergarten on page 2 that it is not funded, and there was an allocation last year of \$2,000. Mr. Balducci said that it was not a

mistake. It depends on how the information is reported to the Department of Education. The district does have one school where it is considered full-day Kindergarten. Based on that reporting, the district does get a small allotment.

Mrs. Ciarlo asked how much the state allocates toward all-day Kindergarten. Mr. Balducci believed the amount to be \$1,500 per student. Mrs. Ciarlo noted that when Western Hills' addition is completed, the portables could be used at the elementary schools for all-day Kindergarten.

Mr. Palumbo stated that Mr. Lupino pointed out to him that Councilwoman Paula McFarland was in the audience as well as Councilwoman Fogarty, and they should be recognized.

Ms. Iannazzi referred to page 9 of the budget regarding Waterman School's special education substitute salary in the amount of \$80 and asked why this amount was so low and if it was enough to cover a substitute for one day. Mr. Balducci responded that the district budgets just over \$1 million for substitutes. At Waterman School for the coming year, he budgeted \$80. He has to look to see how much has been spent year to date. He carries whatever current level it is at and moves it forward one year. If the district

decides to increase the substitute rate, then he will look at the bottom line and it may go from \$1 million to \$1.1 million. This year they may not spend the entire \$80. If they do, he will switch dollars from one account to the other. He likes to start at a base line and then make adjustments as he goes.

Mr. Lupino referred to the sewer rates and asked why the district still gets charged the sewer rates when it is a municipality. The taxpayers are supporting the sewers. The school department never got passed from the City Council sewer rates based on a percentage of water usage. If this were to happen, the district's rates would tumble. Except for the high usage of water to wet the fields, the rates are pretty reasonable. He asked Mr. Balducci if he ever approached the city to get a break. Mr. Balducci responded that he knows the budget topic has been discussed in prior budget years, but a resolution has not taken place. He budgets to anticipate for sewer charges. Sewer bills are received in July, and it is his obligation to pay that commitment. It would be nice to have a conversation regarding the fees. Mrs. Ciarlo added that the district did ask for a tax relief for the Charter School in the amount of \$40,000, and they were unsuccessful.

Mr. Lupino asked Mr. Balducci if in putting the budget together did he include a reduction in workmen's compensation rates. Mr. Balducci responded that statewide it is just the opposite. Being a member of the Rhode Island Interlocal Trust, he attends meetings on a quarterly

basis. Workmen's Compensation rates are actually increasing statewide. The district is fortunate enough to be looking at a level funded year for Workmen's Compensation. On the property and liability side, however, he did factor in a 20% increase, because based on Interlocal meetings that he attended, industry wide they are looking at 15% to 20% increases. The good news is that Workmen's Compensation is pretty stable, and there is a minor increase in property and liability insurance.

Mr. Lupino commented that he had some brief questions regarding health care, but he was not fully prepared to ask them. He asked if the school department's consultant recommended any additional competition. He knows that in the current contracts, the district is bound to Blue Cross and United Health. This is going to be a negotiation year. He asked if the consultant had suggested bringing anyone else into the mix in order to get some additional competitive rates. In response, Mr. Balducci said that the consultant assists the district based on current contract language. The district has coverage through United Health Care and Blue Cross and dental coverage through Delta Dental. That is not to say that during negotiations additional coverage could not be discussed.

Mr. Lupino asked if the consultant ever discusses the fact that because the district is self-insured that the administration go to anyone else, and Mr. Balducci responded no, not yet. Mr. Lupino asked if the district was paying the consultant the same salary as he

was paid in the past given the fact that he also works for the city. Mr. Balducci responded that his contract with the city was negotiated separately. He is under a three-year contract with the school district. This June 30th is the end of his three-year contract. Mr. Balducci will be getting ready to go out to bid again shortly for health consultant services.

Ms. Iannazzi referred to the School Committee accounts on page 133 and indicated that she was unfamiliar with what they are. She asked Mr. Balducci for an explanation of those accounts. Mr. Balducci explained that with regard to the general account, if a School Committee member incurs expenses in the course of doing business as a School Committee member, that person would be reimbursed for mileage, attending conferences, telephone related services, etc. Those are considered general related School Committee expenses. Errors and omissions is an area where he budgets district wide insurance. One of the coverages offered to the district is errors and omissions which means that in the capacity as a School Committee member one could be sued in their capacity as a member. The district has insurance to cover each member if something such as this happened.

Ms. Iannazzi referred to the salaries paid to the athletic coaches. She

stated that she believed in equal pay for equal work and asked why the women coaches and the men's coaches receive different salaries.

In response, Mrs. Ciarlo stated that it is based upon what they are coaching and the step they are on. The scale is different for middle and high school, and there is a seven-step pay scale. The district does not discriminate between male and female. Mr. Lupino added that many of them are based on participation. That is why the football coaches receive the highest salary. They supervise more players. Ms. Iannazzi asked about the difference between softball and baseball coaches' salaries, and Mr. Votto explained that these are negotiated salaries and are part of the negotiation sessions. It is a part of the labor relations when the contract was negotiated. Administration does not set the salary scale. The contracts are up this year.

Mr. Stycos stated that three weeks ago he sent in a list of questions, and he has received no response to them. He asked Mrs. Ciarlo if he would receive answers to those questions, and she indicated that he would.

Mr. Stycos asked where the money shows up in the budget if a gym is rented out. In response, Mr. Balducci said that it is a reimbursable account or a Fund 2 account. The money goes into a revenue account in Fund 2 and then the associated expenses are matched to the fees charged. Mr. Stycos said that if he paid \$100 to rent a gym that money goes into Fund 2, and out of that \$100, the custodian is paid. He asked if there is a net one way or the other. Mr. Balducci

explained that the district doesn't try to make a profit, but it tries to cover the costs. He said that it is a break-even fund. Mr. Stycos asked if there is a report he could get a copy of. Mr. Balducci responded that he

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could give him an accounting of the area where it is charged. Mr. Stycos asked if he wanted to know how much overtime the system paid to custodians could he find it in the budget. He commented that he could find only the overtime paid to custodians for school-related events.

Mr. Stycos indicated that in past years the cafeteria program has made a payment to the school department of \$30,000. He asked if it was in this budget, and Mr. Balducci responded that it was in this budget. He explained that the amount fluctuates from year to year. It depends whether or not the fund the prior fiscal year ends with a surplus. Food Service is trying to pay back an old loan made to them by the school department, but at the same time, he doesn't want to drain Food Service of capital. It is part of the miscellaneous revenue, and \$100,000 is budgeted under miscellaneous revenue. Hopefully the projected payment during 2005-2006 is budgeted as part of that overall amount. The \$30,000 Mr. Stycos referred to may have been a one-year payment to get it going.

Mr. Stycos stated that every year a certain number of dollars is allocated per student for libraries and asked what is budgeted for this year. Mr. Balducci responded that he did not have the figure with him but would get it for him. Mrs. Ciarlo asked Mr. Scaffardi if he knew the per pupil expenditure for library services. Mr. Scaffardi responded that in his conversations with Ms. Bryan, she tried to restore the amount of money that was cut last year. The amount of money put in this year for each school's allocation was what she asked for the previous year. Each school's per pupil expenditure is different in the formula she uses. It depends on the size of the school building's population. Mrs. Ciarlo added that it is based upon base line for the coming year plus trying to restore some of the lost money that she didn't get in the past budget. Mr. Scaffardi believed that Mr. Balducci gave 50% of the allocation. Mr. Balducci explained that the library area was cut 50% this year. At a minimum, Ms. Bryan brought back the 50% she was cut and then looked at the growing population and tried to standardize it to come up with a per pupil amount. He did not have the amount but would obtain it for Mr. Stycos.

Mr. Stycos stated that at the School Buildings Committee meeting in January, there was some discussion regarding children from outside the district sneaking into the Cranston schools. At that meeting, Mr. Lupino mentioned that he was working on something along these lines. Mr. Stycos asked Mr. Lupino if he had any further information on this subject. Mr. Lupino responded that he was working on this with Mr. Scherza. He would like to introduce a resolution that would

require an affidavit to be signed by a parent or caregiver for the child attesting to their residency in the city. He doesn't know where the district can go with it regarding enforcement beyond that. He would like to plant some seed money, and there is one truant officer who is paid \$27,000. It has been suggested that this amount be increased slightly. As the district hopefully recovers some tuitions it may be possible to self-fund this. He disagreed with one of the Council members who thought of it as follows. If the per pupil expenditure is \$10,000 and a

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student at Cranston East is found to live in Providence, and he is sent back to Providence, the district doesn't save \$10,000. It just raises the per pupil expenditure at

that school because if he were taking an English class it would not be reduced by that teacher. There are some savings over the cost of adding up many people. He doesn't know where he is going with this yet, but he knows he wants to have the affidavit so that the district would have some legal responsibility on the part of the person sending the child here. Mr. Palumbo asked Mr. Lupino if he were alluding to the fact that the district will save money. He asked Mr. Stycos if he had any statistics as to how many students are in Cranston schools that should not be here. In response, Mr. Stycos said that he does not have any numbers. At that meeting, Mr. Kevin Flynn made an estimate. Mr. Lupino said that he didn't remember if

Mr. Flynn made an estimate. Mr. Stycos said that Mr. Flynn commented that if one were to look at this year's third graders who are obviously next year's fourth graders and look at statistically how many fourth graders there are this year as opposed to how many third graders last year over a five-year time period and do the same for high school students, high school students are coming from somewhere. Mr. Flynn thinks that one possible answer may be the students coming in from out of the district. Mr. Stycos knows that Mr. Frederick believes this is happening, and he does his best to chase them down. Mr. Stycos asked if the budgeted amount for the truant officer appeared on page 96 and if it was it a full-time or half-time position. Mr. Balducci responded that it is a full-time position. Mr. Stycos suggested that the administration put together a team of people, and he hoped that Mr. Lupino would be a member of the group, to see what other districts do and then come up with a comprehensive plan. At the School Buildings Committee meeting, Mr. Flynn said that there are two truant officers in East Providence. In North Providence, there is only one place that someone can register for school, and that is with the person who is the attendance officer. If there was any suspicion, the person doing the investigating is registering the students. There should be an administrative group to look at all these ideas to see what different communities are doing. They could then come up with a proposal that might need another attendance officer. Mrs. Ciarlo stated that administration definitely supports that. This summer administration will attempt central registration because many people move into the district during that

time. With buildings being closed, it is possible that some students may be accepted who should not be accepted. RIDE doesn't care if the students go from one community to another. The central registration will be held in the Briggs Building. This whole discussion is warranted. There may be students being clustered to another school who are within the Cranston district. Administration does try to follow up on these students. It is ridiculous to think that one truant officer can cover the whole city. It was a part-time position, and it has now become a full-time position. There are certain areas that tend to get more of this than others. Mr. Stycos felt it should be done in conjunction with the budget that the district is trying to do something about this situation. Mr. Stycos asked if central registration would take place all the way through school starting. In response, Mr. Scherza stated that administration is exploring how it can be done personnel wise. The suggestion for the truant officer taking a role in it is a good one and one that

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administration had not thought of. He wants to implement it as early as the end of this school year. There have been meetings with Mr. Dillon, who performs the student information data, Mr. Votto, and himself as to how to monitor those pieces. There is a committee working on the logistics of it right now. Mr. Scherza went on further to say that he was at the same meeting with Mr. Flynn, and by and large he agreed with his numbers, and

some he did not agree with. When one comes out with any kind of a number of how many students they don't know about, one can't measure what one doesn't know. He doesn't think there is a principal in the system who hasn't had several students, and he deals with them almost every day, asking people to leave the system. When the district find out about these students, they are asked to leave immediately. Mr. Stycos asked if central registration would be continued through the school year, and Mr. Scherza said that it would be subject to final approval from Mrs. Ciarlo and her executive staff and the School Committee, but he would like to continue it on a permanent basis for consistency. It would also help with record keeping for the Department of Education. Mrs. Ciarlo added that it would provide better control with the same person asking the same set of questions. People put in telephones to disguise their residency. Mr. Scherza noted that Cranston is one of the few districts that has received \$1/4 million from the state to implement a new student information system. The current system needs upgrading or it would require replacing. With the new system, entire families can be registered at the same time on a central registry rather than at three or five different schools. It will be more efficient, more consistent, and more effective.

Mr. Lupino referred to page 97, elementary and secondary rubbish removal. He asked Mr. Zisseron if the school department were on a cooperative program with someone for this particular bid. In response, Mr. Zisseron said the school department rides on the city

contract for waste management. The school department receives a separate bill for dumping its trash. Mr. Lupino commented that the Governor's proposal is to substantially penalize or decrease the tipping fees for communities that don't meet the 20% recycling portion. This district has been pretty adept at doing its recycling. He asked if the city gets factored into the municipal portion of it. To be denied that rate without factoring in the schools and the city side, that might save the entire city a substantial amount of dollars. Mr. Zisseron told Mr. Lupino that he would have to look into this matter. He noted that the school system does a good job with recycling and its dumping charge was reduced. Mr. Lupino suggested getting this information to the City Council so that it can be married up with the figures from Rhode Island Resource Recovery, and this may save some money for the entire city.

Mr. Archetto referred to page 14, substitute salaries. He asked if they were based on last year's per-hour rate or the suggested rate for this year. In response, Mr. Balducci said that the rate has not changed from last year to this year. It is based on current rates available for substitute teachers. Mr. Archetto indicated that the committee was given a memo regarding suggested rate increases. Mr. Votto explained that the memo

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Mr. Archetto referred to the rates for non-certified personnel

and did not reflect substitute teacher rates. Mr. Balducci added that they were identified on the memo, but the final approval was to amend the non-certified substitute rates not the certified. He only compared the certified teachers to other districts, and Cranston compares pretty well. For certified teachers, it is based on the current rate they are paid. In building next year's budget, he looked at the projected rates for non-certified when projecting next year's dollars.

Mr. Archetto referred to page 126, administration life insurance and asked Mr. Balducci to explain this. Mr. Balducci stated that this is one of the benefits made available to all school employees. It is a \$10,000 life insurance policy at the school district's cost.

Mr. Traficante referred to the Norwood Avenue School and asked if the Adult Education Program was subsidized by the school district or if it was self-sustaining. In response, Mr. Balducci said that it is now called Alternative Education Program. He knows that Ms. Salone is in the process of making it self-sufficient with obtaining grants. The district is not there yet but almost there. The commitment from the school department is minimal at this point. Mrs. Ciarlo added that many of the students who participate in that program are Cranston students who no longer can stay in a regular classroom. The program is there to service Cranston's high school students.

Mr. Stycos referred to the folder containing answers to questions

raised at the January 24th budget hearing. He noted that there was a new personnel report which contained a group of jobs for new teaching positions that are projected at step 10. He asked why they weren't projected at step 3. His thinking is that something such as a math coach position would be bid. The person who would be most likely to bid would be a top step teacher so the math coach would cost step 10, but when the top step teacher moved from the regular teaching position to the math coach position, it would be back filled with a new hire at step 3 as an average. He asked why those positions, including the reading positions, weren't projected at step 3 rather than step 10. Mr. Votto explained when the budget is put together administration has to give the committee the new cost of personnel, and these are new personnel. Rather than misdirecting the committee and indicating that it would be a step 3, administering would be lying. At the elementary level, it would be very difficult to find these elementary teachers with an elementary math certification. It probably will be a step 10 person. This holds true for a reading teacher; they are few and far between. Mr. Stycos asked Mr. Votto if he would agree with him that the math coach, as an example, would cost \$91,306 but the net cost to the system would more likely be the \$65,000. Mrs. Ciarlo asked Mr. Stycos to keep in mind that if they hire a math teacher, they would have to go to the outside. Someone has to be on third step and qualified in order to be a reading consultant. In most instances, the individuals the district is able to find are at the top of the scale. Because math is a difficult area to fill, even in replacing, the district will not likely be able to

replace one with a first or third step teacher. She doesn't want someone who wants to teach math and doesn't have a background and concentration in math.

Mr. Stycos referred to health care, and noted that it seemed the projection was made that every new employee would select the family plan. He asked what the district's experience has been with current employees selecting single or family plan. Mr. Votto responded that from his experience most people would take the family plan if they have a family. The majority of the teachers hired over the past several months have taken the family plan. The spouse may have a plan with a co-pay so they choose Cranston's plan with no co-pay. The approach that Mr. Balducci, Mrs. Ciarlo, and the executive team took is that it is more prudent to look at the extreme rather than what could be. No one knows what the mix will be at the time new teachers are coming in. Administration doesn't base its hiring on whether or not someone has a family plan or a single plan. The budgeting is based on past experience. It is prudent budgeting to be conservative in budgeting.

Mr. Stycos stated that the committee needed to look at the net effect of things. It isn't fair to say that the district will have thirty people

who will retire, and, therefore, the district has to buy thirty more additional health insurance policies. On the other end, there will be twenty-seven most of whom at least will not have Cranston paid health insurance so the net would be three. He further explained that administration is estimating that thirty people will retire this coming year and they will have health insurance until age 65. On the other hand, there will be twenty-seven people who no longer will be using Cranston's health insurance; they will be on Medicare. The net additional cost to the district, what should be budgeted for, is three additional people not thirty people. Mr. Votto explained that when there are thirty retirees, thirty people are hired to take their place. The district also gives the retirees the option to purchase health care for their spouse as well. He received a phone call from a teacher the other day who said that she was planning to retire and asked what the cost would be if she purchased the plan for her husband. She wanted to compare it to what he pays at his place of employment. After comparing the numbers, she will decide to switch her husband's health care to Cranston. When there is a retiree, that person is given the option contractually at that time to purchase another plan for their spouse. Regarding Medicare, Cranston's current contract would suggest that they can continue to buy Blue Cross even though they have reached 65 because in many cases they find it more cost effective for them to buy Cranston's plan because Medicare doesn't cover prescriptions and Cranston's plan does. He cautioned Mr. Stycos that he had to look at the potential for the retirees. In addition, Cranston Public Schools is self-insured even though the retiree pays

for his or her spouse's insurance. It is what people use that affects the bottom line. The older one gets the more the potential is there for usage. Some teachers are retiring at 52 or 53 years of age, and it is then being offered to the spouse as well. If the cost for an individual plan is approximately \$6,000, one has to consider that the only way to be cost effective is when the person has no claims beyond the

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\$6,000. Once that person breaks the \$6,000 barrier, it costs the district money. If the person has claims for \$12,000, it costs the district \$6,000.

Mr. Traficante asked what the percentage of people is going beyond the \$6,000 cost. Mr. Votto responded that he would have to look at the data. He was sure that Mr. Walsh could provide this information. Mr. Palumbo noted that when the cost factor is arrived at, everyone is being factored in. The ones who retire will be at the high end. In effect, if the district wanted to do it in terms of covering cost, they would have to charge the retirees more. Mr. Stycos noted that the district use to charge a family rate to the retirees. He asked for a more detailed analysis of what is going to happen with these retirees. The committee needs to know how many retirees buy for their spouse and also how many go with Medicare and how many keep purchasing health care through the school department. Based on that information, the committee needs to know how many go over the cost

of what they are paying for health insurance. He asked Mr. Votto to take this issue and do a more detailed analysis of it with those different points and any other he could think of. Mr. Votto stated that he had given the committee some information in his memo. There are presently twenty-one who purchase health insurance and twenty-five who purchase Delta Dental who are over 65 years of age. There are twenty-seven who will turn 65 this year. Mr. Stycos asked how many retirees there were over 65 years of age. Mr. Votto was unsure if he could find out how many retirees were over 65 because once they leave he doesn't know how many are still living. Mr. Stycos asked if this information could be obtained through the pension system, and Mr. Votto thought this information would be confidential. Thinking of all the retirees the system has had, it is just a nominal amount. Twenty-one and twenty-five aren't that many who are purchasing the insurance. Mr. Votto told Mr. Stycos to keep in mind that when a retiree reaches 65, he or she may be eligible for Medicare but the spouse may not be. There are some teachers in this system who are not eligible for Medicare, and that is the reason they buy the health care.

Mr. Stycos stated that he has the same kind of argument with the teachers returning from leave. He understands that if a teacher goes out on leave and someone is hired at lower step and the teacher comes back that is a cost to the system. It also has to be projected how many new people will go out on leave and, therefore, the district saves money on those people where there would be a net effect. He

asked how many people in a typical year go out on leave. It should be projected that there would be a savings from that group balancing out the costs of those who would be coming back. Mr. Votto responded that in looking at past history for those who went on parental leave over the past three years and those who will return, there are eleven expected to return this year. They don't have to notify the district until late May or early June that they are returning in September. Based upon that, he sent a letter to them asking them to notify him as a courtesy because it affects layoffs. Out of the five who responded, two are coming back and three are staying out. One can go on past history, but at the same time, people don't have to give an answer at this time.

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Mr. Lupino referred to health care for part-time employees. He knows that they pay a percentage of their premium, and he assumed that they pay Blue Cross or United

Health Care depending upon what plan they are using. He asked who gets the reimbursement from expenses. He explained further that hypothetically he is a half-time employee and he pays one-half the amount for a single plan. He takes advantage of the plan by going to the doctor on a regular basis. He asked if the doctor has on record that he has to pay one-half the bill or does the entire amount go to Blue Cross and they then collect that amount. Mr. Votto explained that it is the same as one who pays for their full coverage. The

person is paying a pro-rated amount to have health care and gets the same service. The bottom line is what the person uses. The person is liable for whatever the cost of the health insurance is to the school department. Because the person is paying for the plan, they have the same coverage as one who doesn't pay toward the plan. Blue Cross pays the claims. Mr. Lupino asked if a part-time employee would pay one-half the cost for an operation, and Mr. Votto explained that he would not. That person is paying for the coverage. Mr. Votto explained further that it is based on usage, and the school district is self-insured. The justification is that one person is a full-time employee and is receiving the health care, and the other person is paying half of the cost of the plan. A person is paying half the plan and the district could be paying \$50,000 in medical expenses if he or she got sick. The school department is paying for a person's medical claims. That is the downside to being self-insured.

Mr. Lupino commented that Mrs. Ciarlo with the support of the School Committee has been trying to rein in as much of the special education tuition costs as possible so the Sanders Program was started three years ago. The cost analysis given indicates that the total operating budget for 2004-2005 is \$599,642, the capacity is twenty students, and the cost per student is \$29,982. However, the cost of an outside placement is \$35,800 resulting in an approximate \$5,800 savings per student for a savings of approximately \$116,000. He noted that this was a substantial amount of money.

Mr. Stycos requested a breakdown of how the figure was put together for the administrative performance account that appears on page 124 of the proposed budget.

Mr. Stycos referred to page 108 of the proposed budget and indicated that the various photocopy accounts were zeroed out. Mr. Balducci explained that this is part of the district's annual order allocation. All of the annual order monies are budgeted at each of the schools, and they get, based on all of the information that comes back to his office on how they plan on spending their allocation, and one of those categories is photocopy supplies, then money is transferred during the budget revision process from the school level into a district wide account. This year \$26,000 is being budgeted under high school for that area. He goes back to zero because he is starting from scratch. The process begins at the school level, and as information comes into his office, it goes into a district wide account instead of budgeting it into individual school accounts. Mr. Stycos responded that this makes it almost impossible to know if the photocopy budget

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is going up or down or whether they are being budgeted up or down. Mr. Balducci further explained that district wide he looks at the bottom line as far as the annual order, and he tries to budget increases across the board. This year it is a 4% cost of living increase. Copy paper may go up only 2%. If Mr.

Stycos had a specific item, Mr. Balducci could tell him from one year to the next what the cost increase is. Mr. Stycos referred to page 76 of the proposed budget and noted that at Western Hills some of the items are going up much more than 4%. Mr. Balducci explained that in 2004-2005, after the first budget revision, those areas were reduced by taking part of their allocation and putting it into district wide accounts, one of which is on page 108. If Mr. Stycos were to look at page 108, it goes from \$24,000 to \$0, but at the school level, it increases. This is where the process starts by budgeting at the school level, and in this case Western Hills, and then where they end up during the budget revision process is where they will spend the money. This is Western Hills' total allocation for all the supplies that Western Hills will use, and one of the components is their copy paper money.

Mr. Palumbo asked Mr. Balducci that if the district simply allocates a certain amount of money for each school to be used the way they want it, they may not have enough money to order items. If their photocopying goes up \$5,000, that is \$5,000 of something else they cannot order. Whether it goes up or down doesn't affect this budget at all. Mr. Balducci explained that a school has to look at their needs from one year to the next. If a school is given a total allocation of \$100,000, they have to take into consideration from one year to the next that if photocopying materials go up dramatically, they may have to purchase less in the coming year. Again, they are given a total allocation. Mr. Palumbo added that even if their photocopying costs

went up dramatically, the committee can't tell them what to spend their money on. Mrs. Ciarlo remarked that this is the role of the school principal to make the determination. There are three categories which are texts, supplies and materials, and equipment. As the amount has gone down, the price of paper has gone up. Many principals have said that it is taking their budget to take care of paper and supplies.

Mr. Stycos referred to the comment made by the Hope Highlands parent and noted that every year administration develops a projected configuration of teachers at the elementary schools and asked where administration stood with those figures. This woman stated it would be nice to have four second grade teachers, but there are also some very small classes in some schools; and some are in the single digits.

These could be combined to save a position to go somewhere such as Hope Highlands School. Mrs. Ciarlo responded that administration is looking at some of those very small classrooms, and they realize the need to close some of the classrooms. The building organization is submitted by the principal right after the first of the year. During March, Kindergarten registrations are held, and administration asks for a building organization after that time. They are definitely looking at the need to close some rooms that are particularly small. They want to be careful in doing this so that they don't have to reopen classrooms. Mr. Scherza commented that Mr. Scaffardi, Mr. Laliberte

and himself have gone through all the positions. They have gone through each building organization which is every single classroom in every single school. Their plan is to consolidate the abnormally small classrooms. As far as the elementary level goes, they have factored in the expectation that they will lose some classrooms. They have compacted and will compact further as needed. The only place they have tried to keep it at 18 or 19 is for the Literacy intensive areas, especially for Kindergarten and Grade 1. Mr. Stycos asked how this was reflected in the budget, and Mr. Scherza commented that he would see it wash out with the pink slips. It will be factored in here by the new positions being created. They won't know the final count until March when Kindergarten registrations are finished. Mr. Stycos asked if the district was budgeting for new positions but not budgeting for positions that are being projected to be eliminated. Mr. Scherza responded that they are not budgeting for positions they will definitely be eliminating. It could be as many as ten. They had eleven positions to compact, and then they had eleven positions at the elementary level alone that were eliminated. He believes they added one first grade for a net of minus ten. At the secondary level, the numbers are fuzzy because of the courses that would be running. There are some inordinately high numbers such as 38 or 39 in geometry or English classes at Cranston West.

Mr. Palumbo stated that there are a number of people who have been

working with administration to see what they could do. They were eventually hoping to lower the budget a little with the attrition or consolidation in this area. It goes against everything that he knows to be true with education. People have said tonight that their classes were at maximum, and a committee member had mentioned that consolidation could be done with the teachers and they could be used at the other end. It is not the way it works. It is the way it should work, but it is not the way it works. The way it works is that if one consolidated and those teacher positions are needed, then the budget is being reduced by that amount. However, the teacher contract states that the district can have a maximum of X number of students in a classroom. Until a class goes beyond that amount, no matter how much one realizes that it would be better education to either have an aide in that classroom or to have lower numbers, it can't be done. No one is going into any of the classrooms and lower them from 25 to 22 because the contract states 25 per classroom. In terms of financing, no one can lower the number to 22. Over the years, the Superintendent has kept the numbers lower in Title 1 areas, and they have better results. The results are better because of what Mrs. Ciarlo and her staff are doing in those areas. Administration can't consolidate classrooms at Arlington School and send that teacher to some other school; it doesn't work that way. Mr. Lupino said that he attended the Hope Highlands School PTO meeting last evening, and it was mentioned that the average of all second grade classrooms there is 21. The parents were trying to make the point that if one were to take the 75 students there now and add in 7 or 8

that are clustered out, it would justify based on the other numbers that there would be a position added there. Mr. Lupino told the parents that in prior budget years they would have been able to accommodate them, but the district is in a financial

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situation where it needs to save that position. Mrs. Ciarlo remarked that the parents need to remember that no deed goes unpunished. Administration said that they weren't going to take just poverty schools. This is the first year that Hope Highlands has had teacher assistants. They had three and now they have two. Administration was taking away from other schools in order to supply them with aides. She would love to have all of the classrooms smaller, but it is impossible. They have two for second grade to share among themselves. It was very generous on the part of the school department to give them those assistants. At this particular time of year, it is ridiculous to bring a budget forward. Administration wants to be fair, and someone wants an absolute number from them. She will be working very closely with the committee in doing that.

Mr. Balducci commented that a question was raised as to what was budgeted for staff reductions, and the account is teacher retirement and is noted on page 125. This account serves two purposes, it is to budget the anticipated thirty teachers retiring and also the reduction

of ten teaching positions. There is a reduction to the budget in the amount of \$700,000. He referred to page 9 slide 27 of the Power Point presentation, and this is one of the reductions identified. Mr. Stycos asked Mr. Balducci what number he was using for staff and retirement savings. Mr. Balducci said that he used \$13,000 per retiree, and he used the current step 1 plus 3% x 10 teaching positions.

Ms. Iannazzi asked Mr. Balducci if he was taking into account the numbers from the Governor's office or was he waiting until the budget is actually passed with the legislature. Mr. Balducci suggested that when the committee deliberates on February 14th prior to delivering the final budget to the Mayor's office the Governor's proposal should be taken into consideration at a minimum. If all goes well, when the final numbers materialize in June, hopefully there will be more money; and that can be addressed at that point. This budget should be in line with the Governor's proposal.

Mr. Stycos asked for the breakdown of the \$729,000 because he felt the numbers were too low. Mr. Balducci said they are using \$33,960 as the cost of a step 1 teacher X 10 teaching positions. This is an addition of \$339,960. The \$729,000 is solely a salary account, so he is showing the salary only. Health care, pension, and dental are additional savings.

Mr. Palumbo stated that the figures in this budget were very real. As

much as he would like to have a department that could do statistical analysis, the district does not have the luxury of having a staff that is free to do all these things. When one looks at this budget, overall it has been very carefully fashioned and one won't find anything outrageous or anything that is not reasonable.

Mr. Lupino referred to the technology area and indicated that the proposed budget earmarked a wish for three computers per elementary school. He asked why it was being done that way instead of basing it on need. In response, Mr. Laliberte said that

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the district had to submit a technology plan, and the technology plan called for three computers for every elementary school so that they could start recycling those as they

needed them. They have recycled some of the high school computers down into the elementary level. The district is still not at the point where there are five computers in every elementary classroom which is one of the things that administration wanted to do. Mr. Lupino commented that he was trying to work with Mr. Rainone to get some computers from CCRI to recycle them. One of the frustrations expressed at the Hope Highlands PTO meeting last evening was computer repair. Someone claimed that one technician visits that school for two hours every other week to repair computers.

He asked if more dollars could be shifted into this area. Mrs. Ciarlo

responded that the schools have older computers so more are breaking down. She will touch base with Donna-Marie Frappier who is the Networking Supervisor to go over the technicians' schedules. There are three technicians plus Donna Marie Frappier fixing computers. She would rather see an entire crew go in after school to get the computers fixed. She noted that she has received no phone calls complaining about computer repair service. Mr. Raymond Connetta, one of the computer technicians, stated that there is a specific schedule for repairing computers. Each school is allotted approximately four hours. Either Monday or Friday is designated as group day and all three technicians do whatever has to be done. Mrs. Ciarlo asked Mr. Connetta to find out where Hope Highlands is on that list. Mr. Lupino approximated the time for Hope Highlands' repairs to be three days. He indicated that he would like to see this area increased. Mr. Archetto noted that he believed it was a state mandate that there be three computers in every classroom. He asked if the school department was involved in any relationships with corporations, banks or companies where they update their computers and the school department would receive the used computers. In response, Mrs. Ciarlo said that Bryant College and the Armed Forces have donated computers to the school system. She asked Mr. Archetto to let her know if he knows of any company looking to donate computers. Mr. Lupino remarked that the district would have to use its own people to clean the drives. Mr. Laliberte noted that when the district first began accepting donations, they were receiving many donations from various places; and this brings a whole set of

problems of its own because many of them weren't compatible if they were linking up to other systems.

Mr. Lupino asked if there was a need for an additional budget hearing on February 7th, and Ms. Iannazzi and Mr. Traficante requested the additional hearing. Mr. Palumbo stated that the next budget hearing would be held at 7:00 p.m. on Monday, February 7th, at Western Hills Middle School.

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Moved by Mr. Lupino, seconded by Mr. Traficante and unanimously carried to adjourn the public budget work session.

There being no further business to come before the hearing, it was adjourned at
10:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Anthony J. Lupino

Clerk